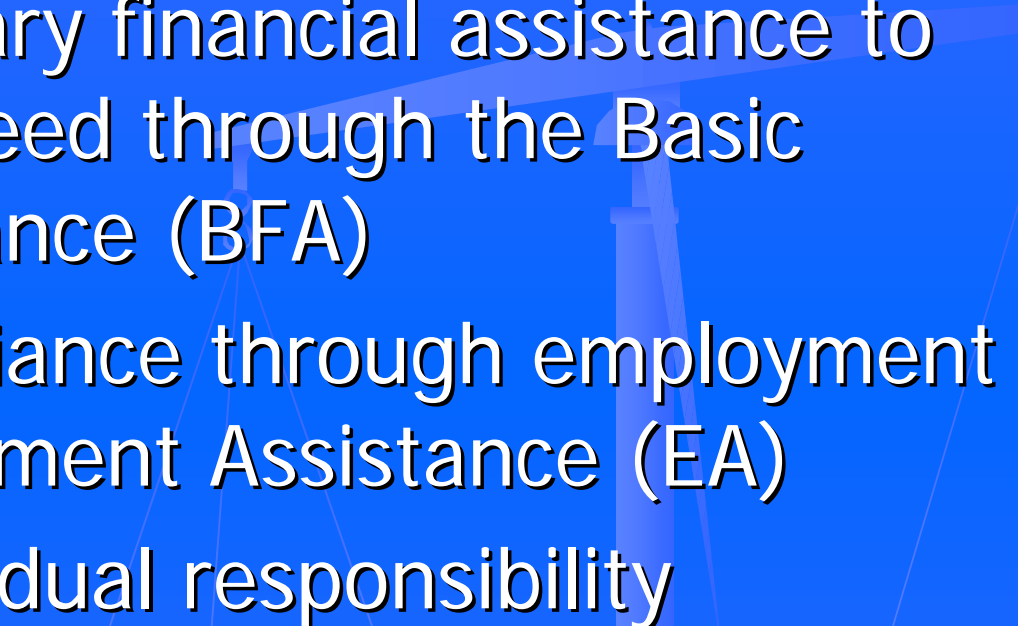




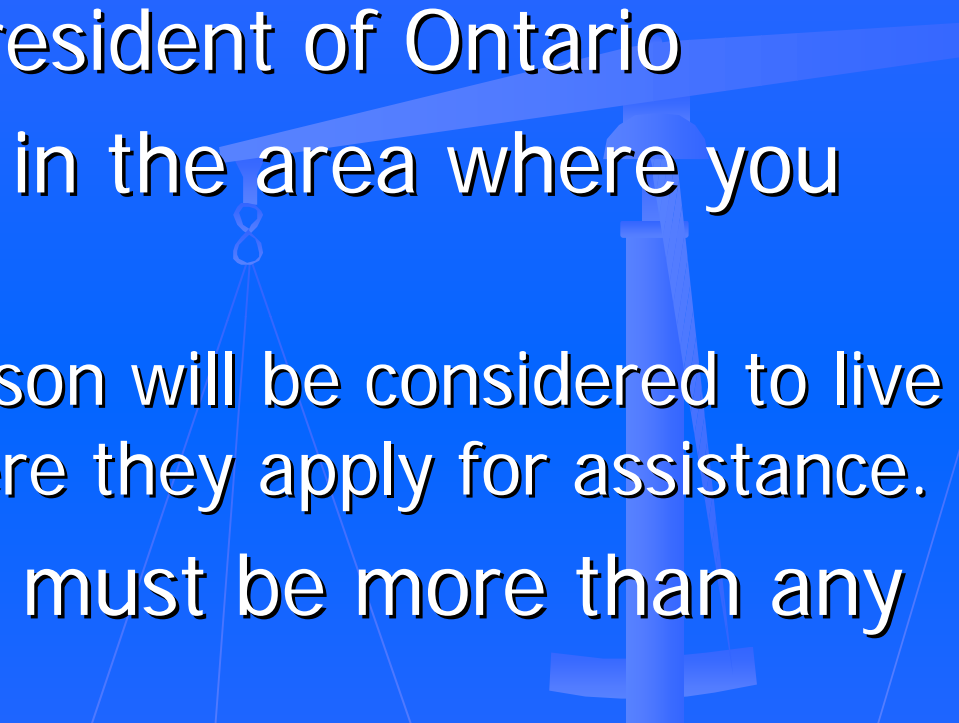
SWIM – Single Mother's Rights to Ontario Works

**A Project by Pro Bono Students Canada
University of Western Ontario – Faculty
of Law**

Purpose of Ontario Works

- Provide temporary financial assistance to those most in need through the Basic Financial Assistance (BFA)
 - Promote self reliance through employment through Employment Assistance (EA)
 - Recognize individual responsibility
- 

Who is Eligible for Basic Financial Assistance?

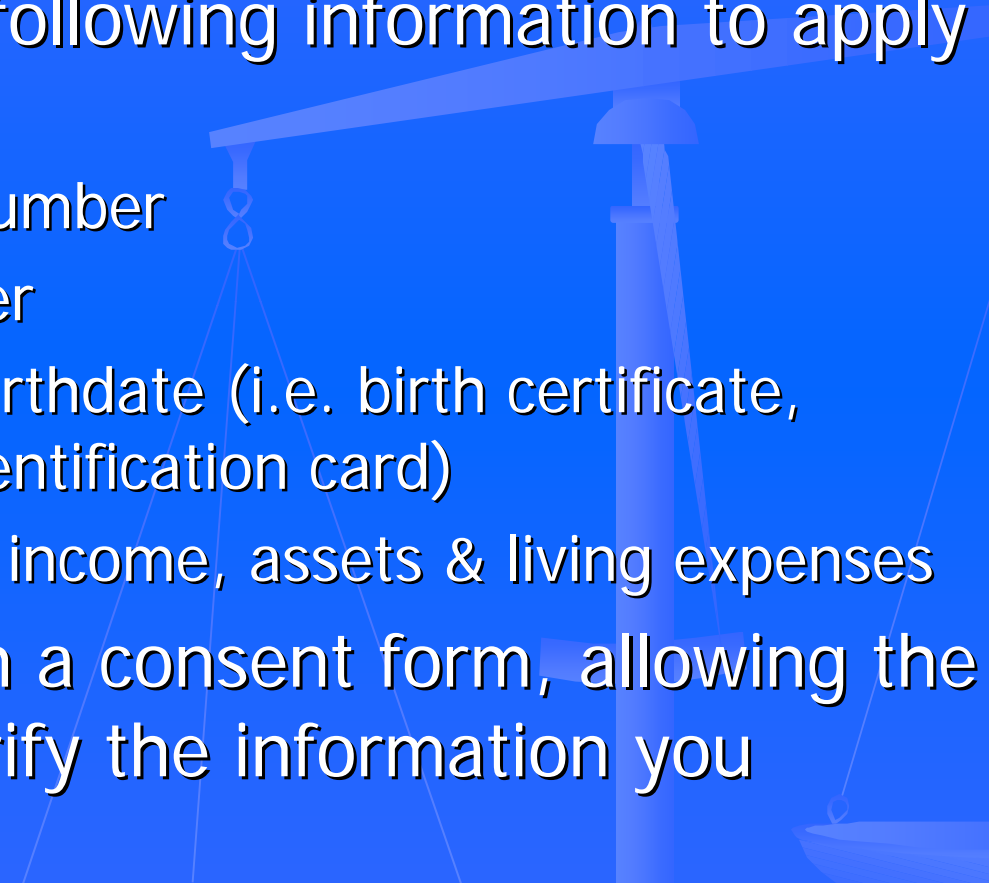
- You must be a resident of Ontario
 - You must apply in the area where you ordinarily live
 - A homeless person will be considered to live in the area where they apply for assistance.
 - Living expenses must be more than any income
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Who is Eligible for Basic Financial Assistance? Cont'd...

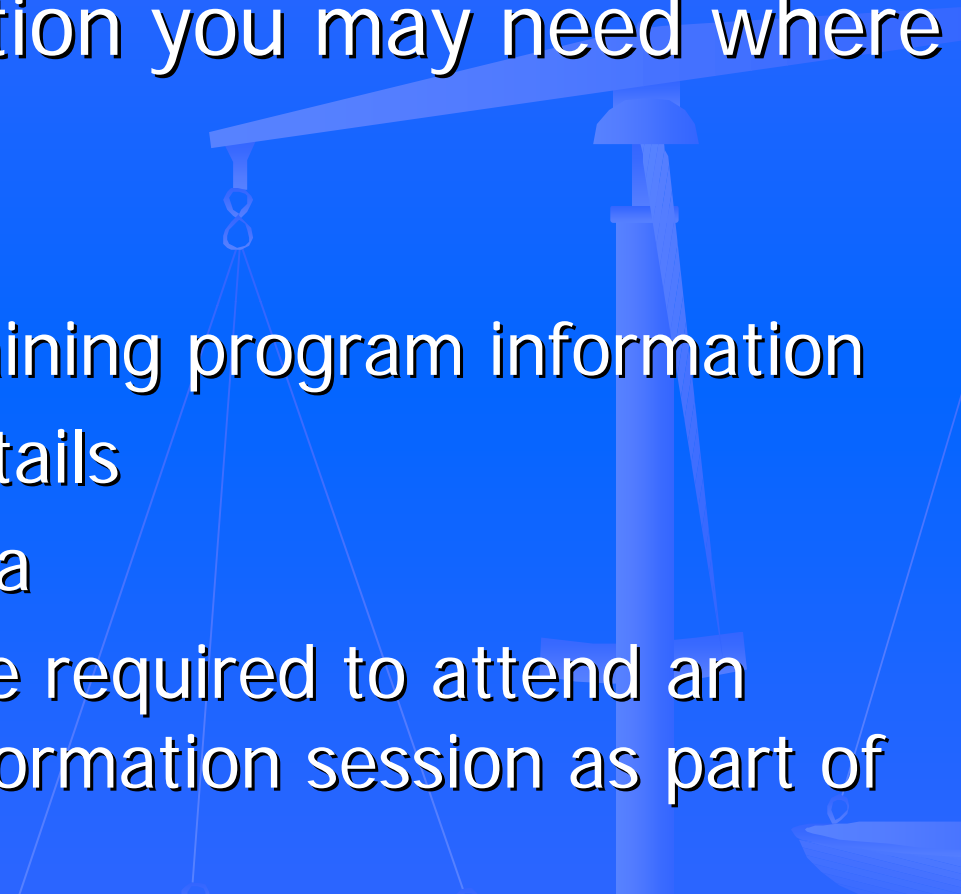
- Your assets are not valued at more than:
 - \$1,487 for the mother and one child, plus \$500 for each additional child



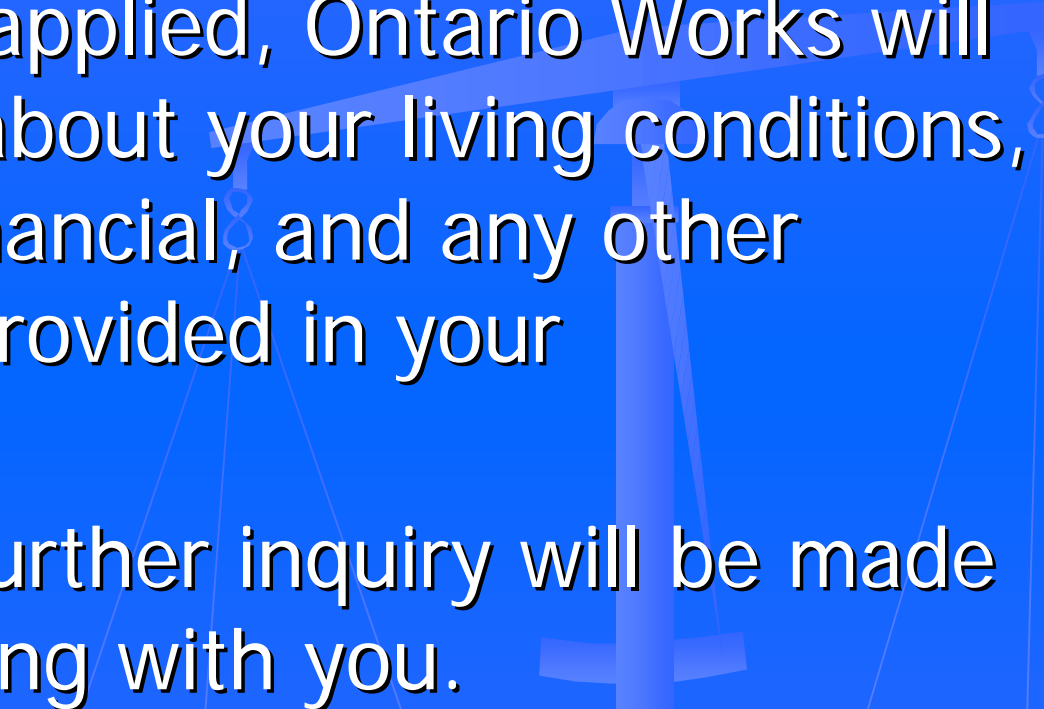
How to Apply for Assistance

- You will need the following information to apply for assistance:
 - Social insurance number
 - Health care number
 - Proof of identity/birthdate (i.e. birth certificate, driver's license, identification card)
 - Information about income, assets & living expenses
 - You must also sign a consent form, allowing the government to verify the information you provide
- 

How to Apply for Assistance Cont'd

- Further information you may need where relevant:
 - Doctor's report
 - Education or training program information
 - Employment details
 - Status in Canada
 - You may also be required to attend an employment information session as part of your application
- 

You've Applied... Now What?

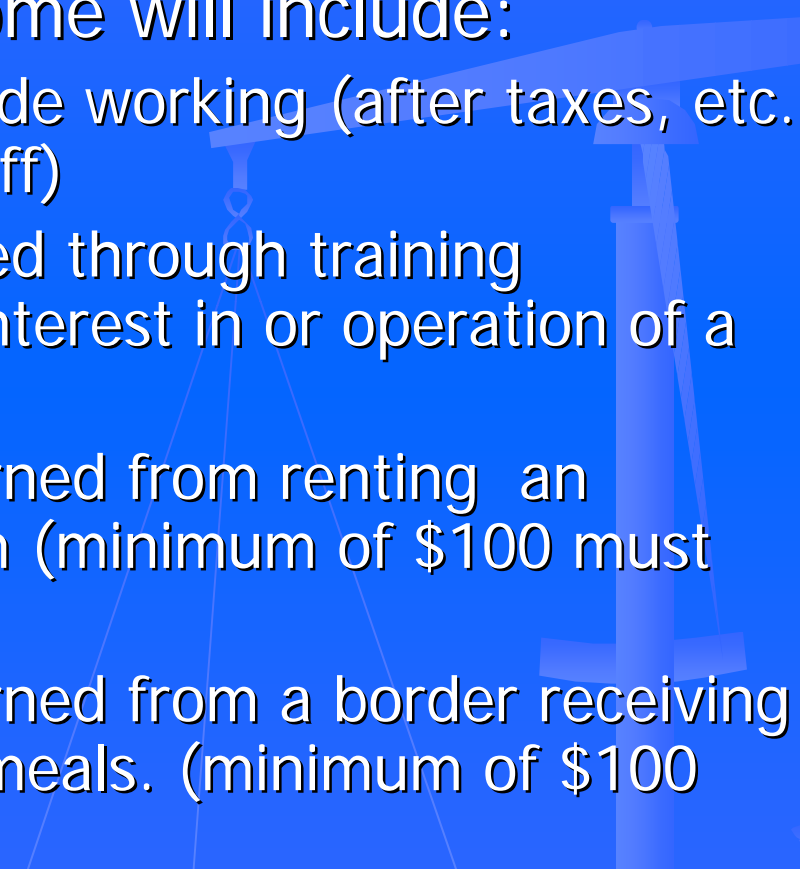
- Once you have applied, Ontario Works will make inquiries about your living conditions, employment, financial, and any other circumstances provided in your application.
 - If approved, a further inquiry will be made through a meeting with you.
- 

You've Been Approved, What Can You Expect?

- To determine how much assistance you will get on a monthly basis, Ontario Works will consider the following:
 - Total monthly income – total monthly expenses = ???



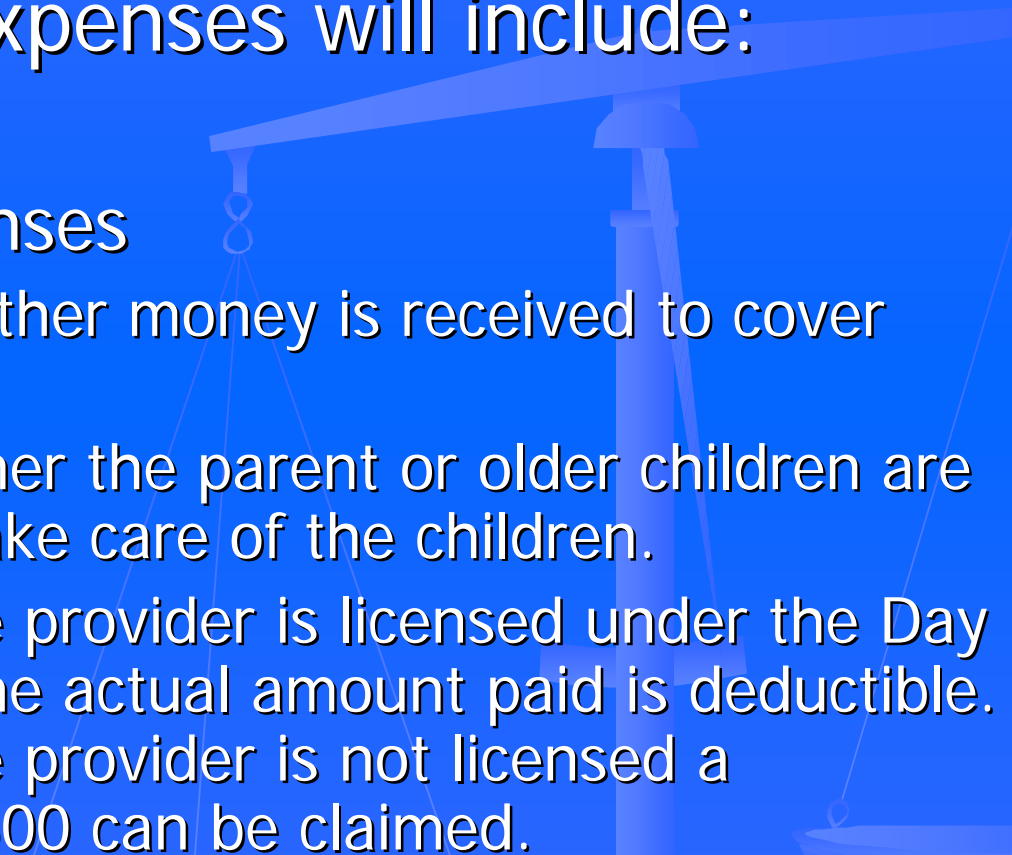
Doing the Math!

- Total monthly income will include:
 - 50% of Money made working (after taxes, etc. have been taken off)
 - Any money received through training programs or any interest in or operation of a business
 - 60% of money earned from renting an apartment or room (minimum of \$100 must be claimed)
 - 40% of money earned from a border receiving both lodging and meals. (minimum of \$100 must be claimed)
- 

Amounts not included as Income

- Several benefits do not have to be claimed as income. These include:
 - Loans used for purchasing a vehicle necessary for employment
 - Loans used as a deposit to secure housing
 - Bursaries, Scholarships, etc. for educational purposes
 - Death benefits
 - Some income tax refunds
 - Some Workers Compensation benefits
 - Assistance received for a disabled child
 - Canada Child Tax Benefits
- *** For a complete listing of exemptions see s. 52 - s. 54 of the Ontario Works Act, 1997 Ontario Regulation 134/98 ***

Doing the Math! Cont'd

- Total monthly expenses will include:
 - Rent
 - Child care expenses
 - As long as no other money is received to cover these costs.
 - As long as neither the parent or older children are being paid to take care of the children.
 - If the child care provider is licensed under the Day Nurseries Act the actual amount paid is deductible. If the child care provider is not licensed a maximum of \$600 can be claimed.
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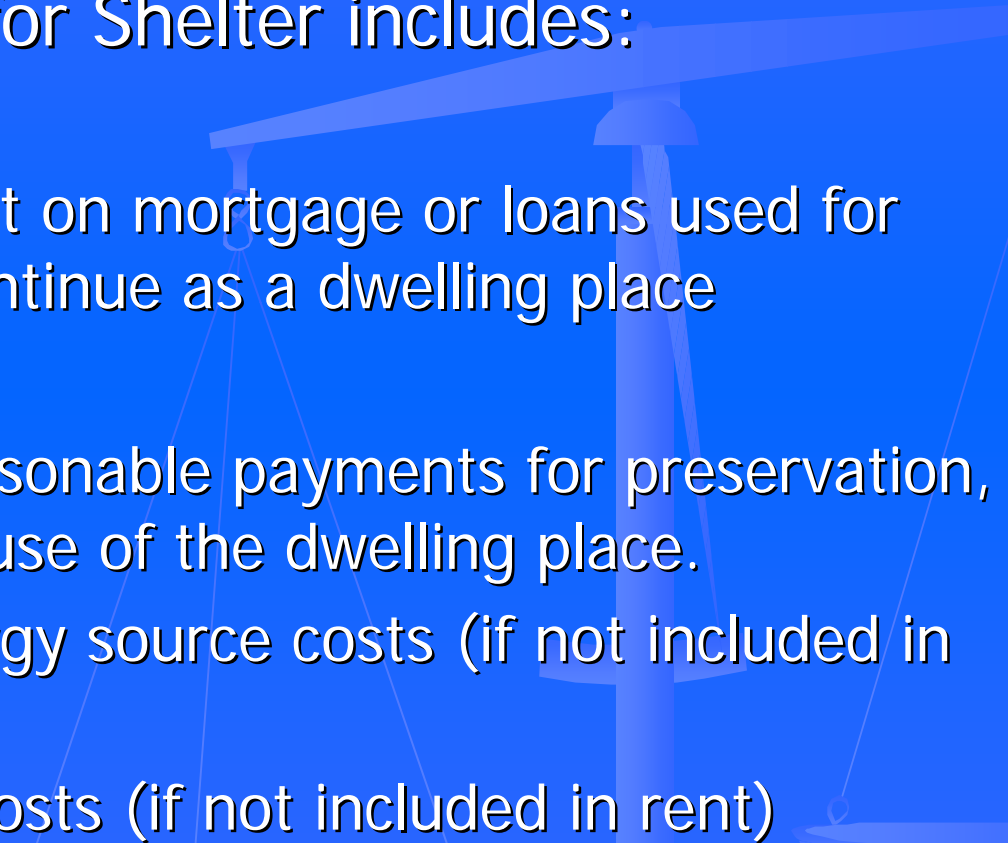
What are the Benefits? Basic Needs

Children 13 and Over	Children under 13	Amount Received
0	0	\$201
0	1	\$460
1	0	\$501
0	2	\$548
1	1	\$590
2	0	\$627

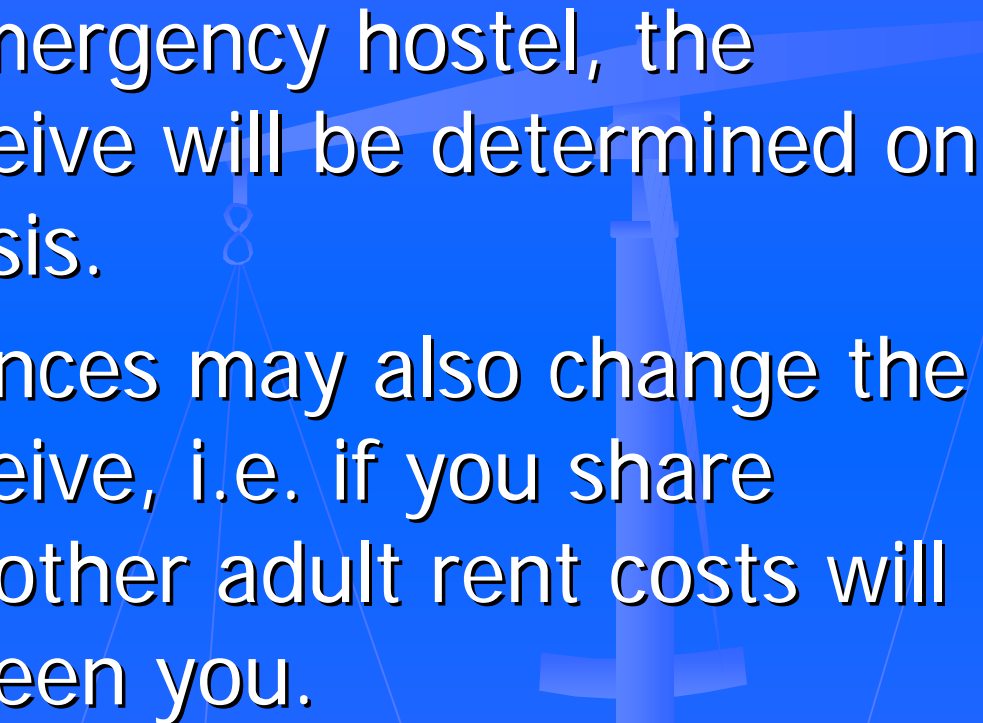
For each additional dependant, add \$141 if child is 13 years of age or older, and \$103 if child is under 13

***These numbers were taken from s. 41 of the Ontario Works Act, 1997
Ontario Regulation 134/98***

What are the benefits? Shelter

- Amount awarded for Shelter includes:
 - Rent
 - Principal or interest on mortgage or loans used for the property to continue as a dwelling place
 - Property taxes
 - Necessary and reasonable payments for preservation, maintenance and use of the dwelling place.
 - Heat or other energy source costs (if not included in rent)
 - Water & sewage costs (if not included in rent)
- 

What are the Benefits? Shelter Cont'd

- If living in an emergency hostel, the amount you receive will be determined on an individual basis.
 - Other circumstances may also change the amount you receive, i.e. if you share housing with another adult rent costs will be divided between you.
- 

What are the benefits? Shelter Cont'd

- The maximum monthly award for shelter is:

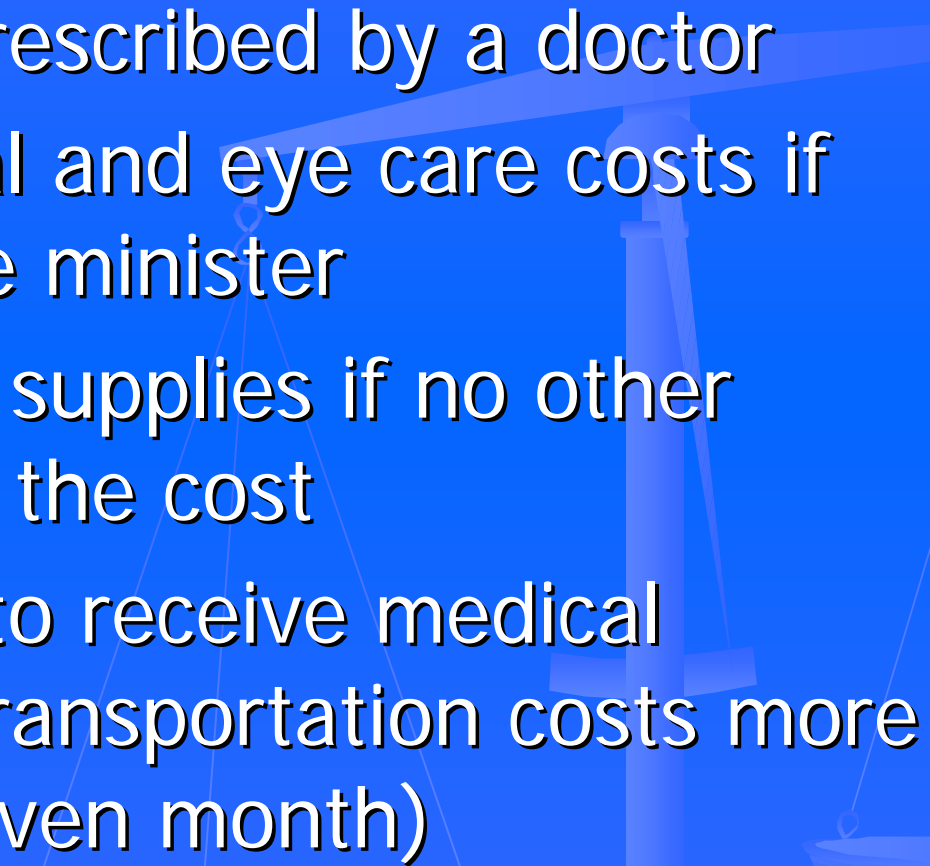
Number of Children	Maximum Shelter Benefit
1	\$527
2	\$571
3	\$621
4	\$669
5 or more	\$694

***These numbers were taken from s. 42(2) of the Ontario Works Act, 1997
Ontario Regulation 134/98***

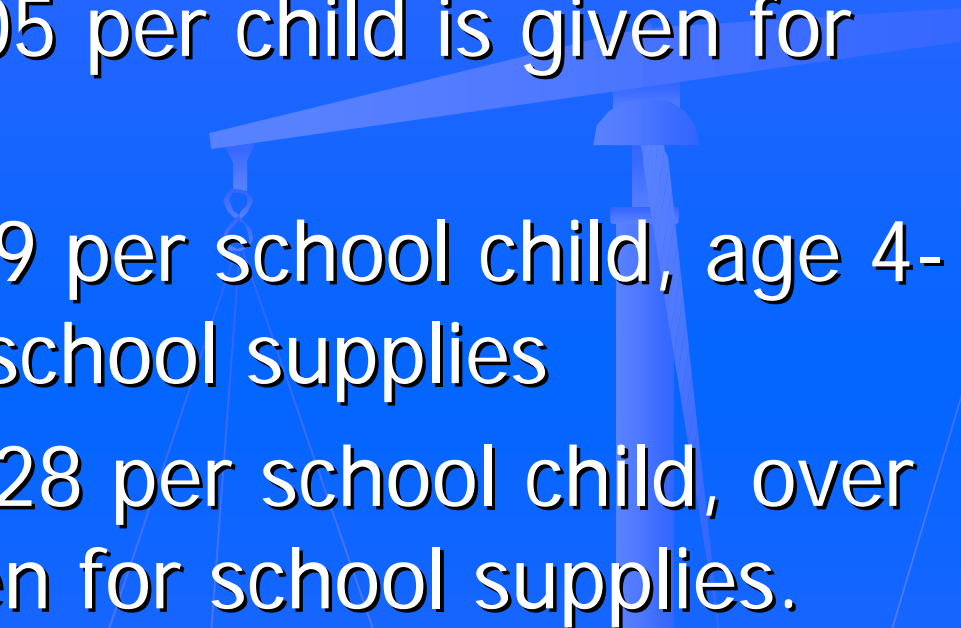
What are the benefits? Special Circumstances

- For pregnant mothers, an additional \$40 a month during the pregnancy is available.
- If a health professional confirms the pregnant mother needs a non-dairy diet an additional \$50 a month is provided.
- A long stay in a hospital, jail or substance treatment program may also effect the amount received for basic needs or shelter.

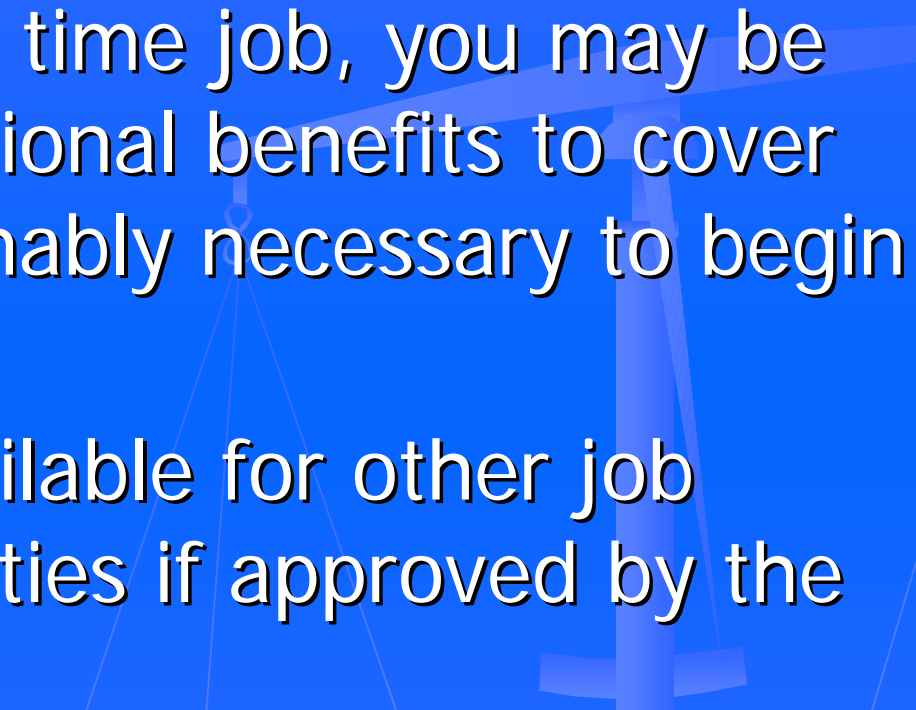
Other Available Benefits – Health Benefits

- Cost of drugs prescribed by a doctor
 - Children's dental and eye care costs if approved by the minister
 - Cost of diabetic supplies if no other program covers the cost
 - Transportation to receive medical treatment. (if Transportation costs more than \$15 in a given month)
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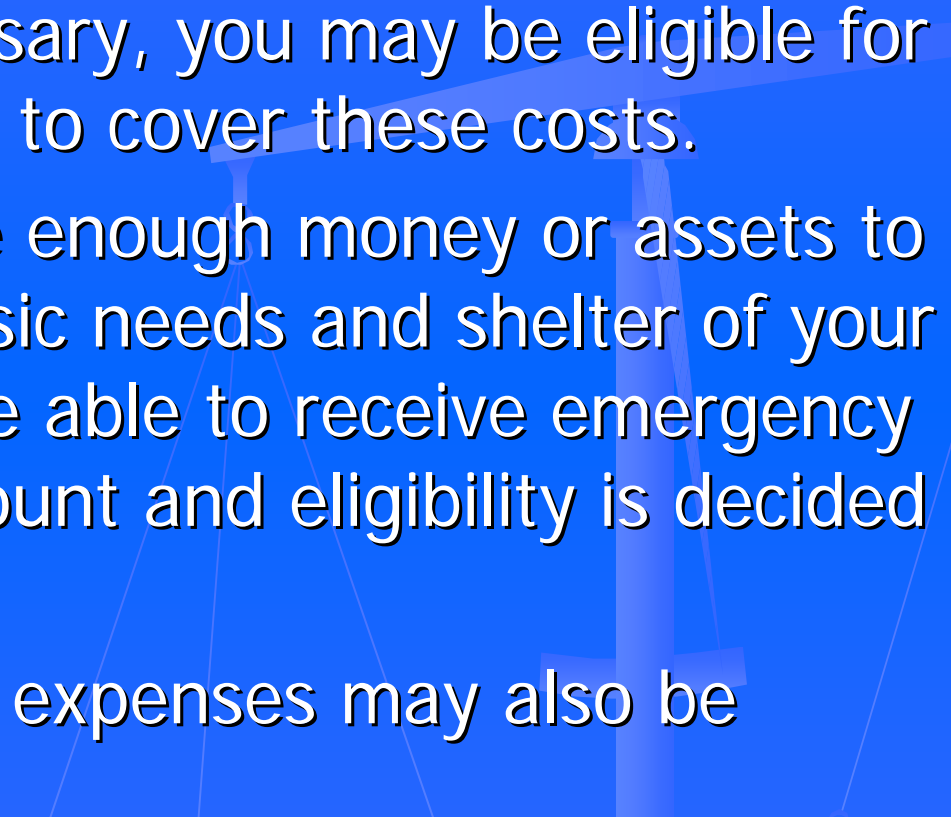
Other Benefits - Children

- Once a year \$105 per child is given for winter clothing
 - Once a year, \$69 per school child, age 4-12, is given for school supplies
 - Once a year, \$128 per school child, over 13 years, is given for school supplies.
- 

Other Benefits – Finding a Job

- If you find a full time job, you may be eligible for additional benefits to cover expenses reasonably necessary to begin your job
 - Benefits are available for other job assistance activities if approved by the Minister
- 

Other Benefits – Emergency Situations

- If moving is necessary, you may be eligible for additional benefits to cover these costs.
 - If you do not have enough money or assets to provide for the basic needs and shelter of your family, you may be able to receive emergency benefits. The amount and eligibility is decided by the Minister.
 - Funeral and burial expenses may also be covered.
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What Else Do You Need To Know?

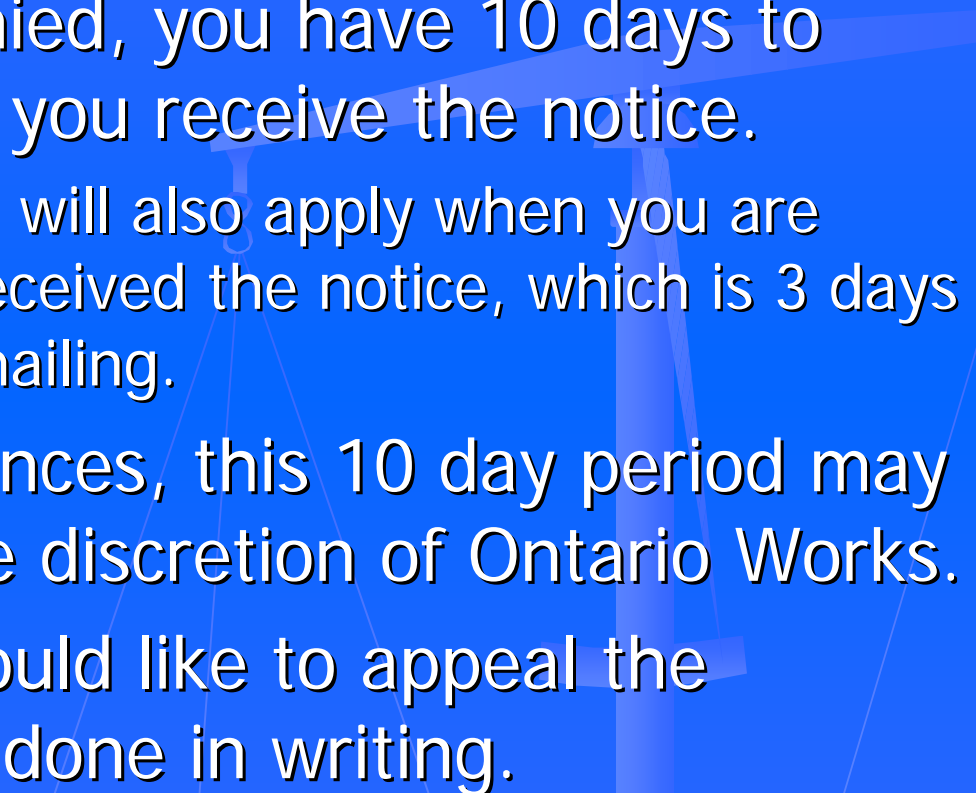
- As a recipient of Ontario Works you will likely be required to pursue child and/or spousal support through the Family Support Program.
- Assistance will be provided to help you in meeting this requirement.
- For more information see:
http://www.london.ca/CSLR/CommServ/family_support.htm.

Appeals



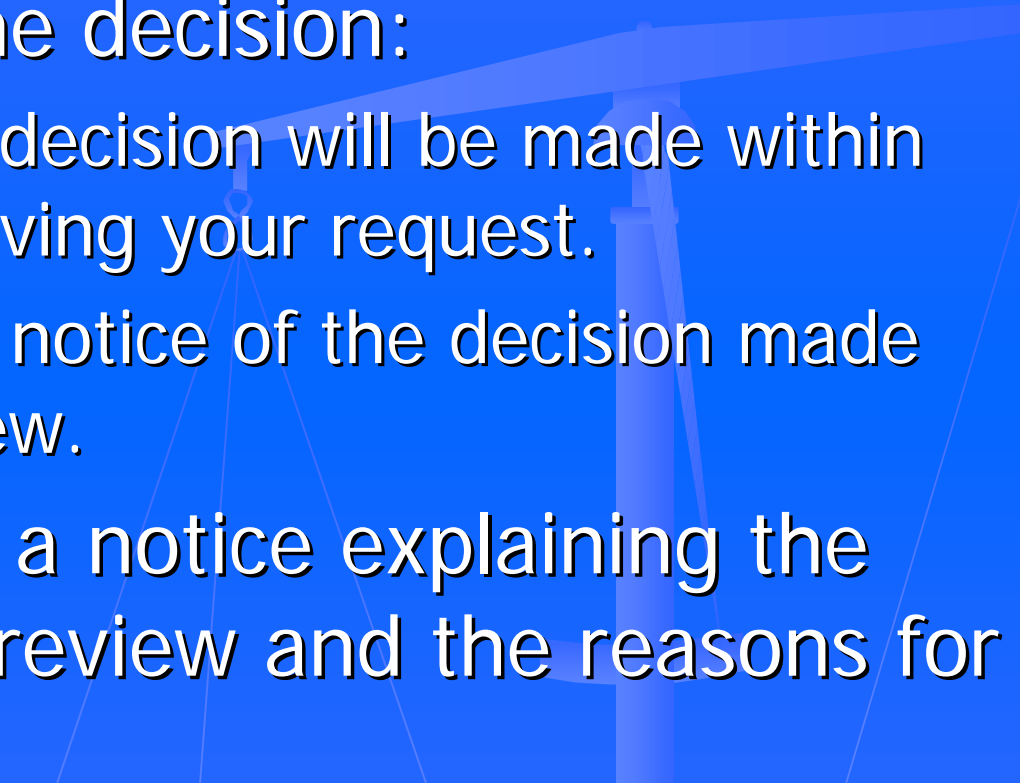
- If you are denied assistance you can appeal the decision.
- There are two different types of decisions that you can appeal:
 - You can appeal a decision denying assistance.
 - You can appeal the amount of the assistance you are eligible for.
 - The appeal process is the same for both types of decisions.

You've Been Denied, What Now?

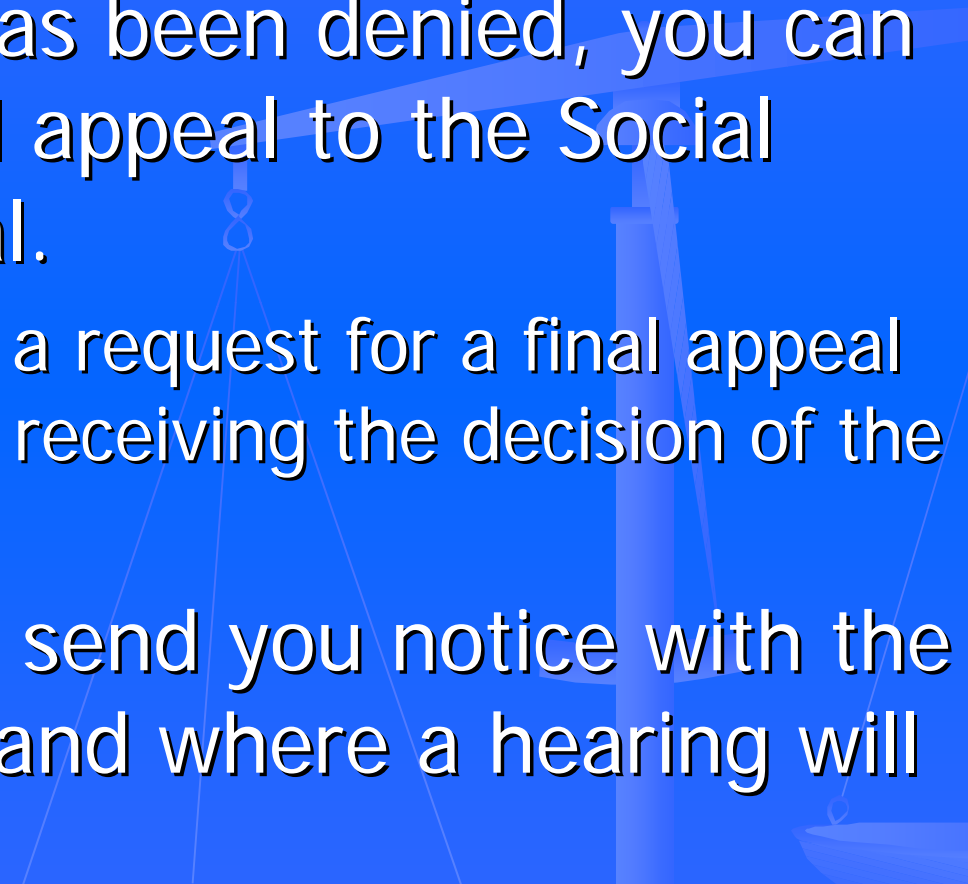
- If you've been denied, you have 10 days to appeal from when you receive the notice.
 - This 10 day period will also apply when you are deemed to have received the notice, which is 3 days from the date of mailing.
 - In some circumstances, this 10 day period may be extended at the discretion of Ontario Works.
 - Notice that you would like to appeal the decisions must be done in writing.
- 

You've Been Denied, What Now?

Cont'd

- The review of the decision:
 - A review of the decision will be made within 10 days of receiving your request.
 - You will receive notice of the decision made during this review.
 - You will be sent a notice explaining the outcome of the review and the reasons for that decision.
- 

Your Appeal Was Denied. What Can You Do?

- If your appeal has been denied, you can still make a final appeal to the Social Benefits Tribunal.
 - You must make a request for a final appeal within 1 year of receiving the decision of the appeal.
 - The tribunal will send you notice with the details of when and where a hearing will be held.
- 

The Decision of the Tribunal



- You will receive a written decision from the Tribunal within 60 days from the date of the hearing.
- You can request a reconsideration of the decision made by the Tribunal within 30 days of receiving the decision.
 - The Tribunal will determine whether or not to reconsider the decision.
- Finally, the decisions of the Tribunal can be appealed to provincial court.

Where you can turn for Help

- Several Free Legal Services are available
- UWO Community Legal Services
 - More information available online at www.cls.law.uwo.ca or by calling (519) 661-3352.
- Neighborhood Legal Services.
 - For more information call (519) 438-2890.
- London Legal Aid Society
 - More information available at www.legalaid.on.ca or by calling (519) 433-8179.



Additional Resources - Housing

- In London, there are a number of housing communities which are subsidized by the government.
- Information is available at www.london.housing.ca including a directory of possible housing.
- Assistance may also be available through the London Registry and Rent Bank. Call (519) 434-3344 for more information.



Other Available Social Programs

- Child care – Information on subsidized child care is available at www.info.london.on.ca.
 - Additional assistance for child care costs for children under 7 may be available through the Ontario Child Care Supplement for Working Families.
 - See www.trd.fin.gov.on.ca.
- Additional assistance for families in hard times may be available through the National Child Benefit Emergency Fund (part of the Boys' and Girls' Club). More information is available online at www.bgcllondon.ca.

Other Available Social Programs

- Utility payment assistance - United Way of London and Middlesex Heat and Warmth Program (THAW).
 - This organization provides emergency assistance in paying utility bills before heat or electricity get cut off.
 - Call (519) 438-1723 extension 238.
- Information relating to many other social services is available online at www.info.london.on.ca. Information includes:
 - Support groups.
 - Shelters and drop-ins.
 - Clothing or household items.
 - Employment and education.

LEGAL DISCLAIMER

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